

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 6 with the following amended paragraph:

-- ~~The present invention provides a~~ A device for securing and adjusting laces, including any types of cord or string, of a wide variety of articles. The device comprises a body, a top surface, a bottom surface, and a perimeter. The top surface and the bottom surface of the device may be separated by a constant or a variable depth. The body of the device is provided with at least two "lateral" apertures positioned laterally on opposite sides of a center on the body. The body is further provided with at least one "central" aperture positioned between the lateral apertures, and preferably near the center of the body. --